

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1 (currently amended). An image processing apparatus, comprising:

~~a processor, wherein the processor places bits for describing information, different from information of image data obtained by image processing on original image data only in specific bit positions of multiple bits of pixel data only at predetermined positions of said processed image for performing image processing on original image data to obtain processed image data, the original image data and the processed image data being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which the pixel data being~~ is expressed by using multiple bits,

wherein the processor embeds bits, which describe information different from information representing said processed image data, in pixels of said processed image data placed at predetermined positions on an image represented by said processed image data.

2 (original). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said pixels are dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on said image.

3 (original). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information different from information of said processed image data is information describing the contents of image processing performed on said original image data to obtain said processed image data.

4 (original). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information different from information of said processed image data is information describing time when said image processing is performed on original image data to obtain said processed image data.

5 (original). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information different from information for describing said processed image data is information describing time when said bits are placed.

6 (currently amended). An image processing method comprising:

obtaining first processed image data by performing image processing on original image data, the original image data and the processed image data being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed by using multiple bits; and

placing bits, ~~which describe for describing~~ information different from information ~~of representing~~ said first processed image data, in pixels of said first processed image data placed only in specific bit positions of multiple bits of pixel data only at predetermined positions ~~of on an image represented by said processed image, each of the pixel data being expressed by using multiple bits.~~

7 (original). An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said pixels are dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on said image.

8 (original). An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said information different from information of said first processed image data is information describing the contents of image processing performed on said original image data to obtain said first processed image data.

9 (previously presented). An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said information different from information of said first processed image data is information describing time when the first processed image data is obtained.

10 (previously presented). An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein said information different from information of said first processed image data is information describing time when bits for describing information different from information of said first processed image data are placed.

11 (currently amended). A recording medium in which a program for a computer is stored, wherein said program is one that enables the computer to perform the following processing:

image processing on original image data to obtain processed image data, the original image data and the processed image data being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed by using multiple bits, wherein ~~placing bits, which describe for describing~~ information different from information representing said processed, are placed in pixels of said processed of image data, which is obtained by image processing on original image data, only in specific bit at predetermined positions of multiple bits of pixel data only at predetermined positions on an image represented by of said processed image, ~~each of the pixel data being expressed by using multiple bits.~~

12 (original). A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said pixels are dispersed at a plurality of predetermined positions on said image.

13 (original). A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said information different from information of said processed image data is information describing the contents of image processing performed on said original image data to obtain said processed image data.

14 (original). A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said information different from information of said processed image data is information describing time when said image processing is performed on original image data to obtain said processed image data.

15 (original). A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said information different from information of said processed image data is information describing time when said bits are placed.

16-20 (canceled)

21 (currently amended). An image processing method comprising:

obtaining processed image data by performing image processing on original image data, the original image data and the processed image data being comprised of a plurality of pixels, each of which is expressed using multiple bits; and

placing bits for describing information different from information representing of the processed image data in pixels of said processed image data placed at predetermined positions on an image represented by said processed image data~~specific bit positions of pixel data at predetermined pixels of said processed image~~, each of the predetermined pixels of said processed image being separated by at least one pixel from the rest of the predetermined pixels.

22 (previously presented). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the positions of pixels in which the bits are placed is decided in accordance with a predetermined procedure irrespective of pixel data.

23 (previously presented). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the positions of pixels in which the bits are placed is predetermined fixed positions irrespective of pixel data.

24 (previously presented). An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the positions of pixels in which the bits are placed is a predetermined position.